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SOUTH ASIAN NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION
STATUS, CAUSES AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

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> Pakistan can build a [nuclear] bomb whenever it wishes Once you have acquired the technology, which Pakistan has, you can do whatever you like [1]
>
> Pakistani President Zia ul-Haq
>
> We intend meeting President Zia's threat We will give an adequate response [2]
>
> Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Ghandi
>
> We believe that both India and Pakistan could assemble a limited number of nuclear weapons in a relatively short time frame [3]
>
> U S Department of State
>
> The arms race between India and Pakistan poses perhaps the most probable prospect for future use of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons Both nations have nuclear weapons development programs and could, on short notice, assemble nuclear weapons
>
> R James Woolsey, CIA Director

While the rest of the world has left the Cold War behind, India and Pakistan remain locked in their own Cold War Indo-Pakistani zero sum competition is founded on mutual animosity since their separation and the end of British colonial rule in 1947 It is fueled by the lingering dispute over Kashmir, the historic Hindu-Muslim rivalry and the contradictory *raison d'etre* of each state -- Pakistan's principle of statehood for contiguous Muslim lands and India's principle of multinational secularism Indo-Pakistani rivalry resulted in war in 1948, 1965 and 1971, and came perilously close to war again in 1987 and 1990

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1 Hagerty, Devin T , "Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia The 1990 Indo-Pakistani Crisis," International Security, Vol 20, Winter 1995/96, p 95

2 Hagerty, p 95

3 U S Department of State, "Report to Congress Update on Progress Toward Regional Nonproliferation in South Asian," December 1996, p 1

Today the continuation of this rivalry could result in a war which includes the use of nuclear weapons Both countries possess a nuclear weapons capability and are developing or have developed ballistic missile delivery means which threaten to destabilize their nuclear competition For over two decades, U S nuclear nonproliferation policy aimed to rollback South Asian nuclear capabilities using a Cold War global nonproliferation strategy This strategy failed to prevent development of South Asian nuclear weapons capabilities and advanced nuclear delivery means

This essay argues that U S nonproliferation policy must be reoriented to accommodate the unique context of South Asian nuclear competition Before proposing such a strategy, however, it will first examine the South Asian context -- the history, status and doctrine of Indo-Pakistani nuclear programs, and their incentives for retaining a nuclear capability Next it will briefly review the history of U S nonproliferation policy for the region as a means of deriving some lessons for future strategy Finally, it will propose a new U S nonproliferation strategy which addresses the unique South Asian context for nuclear proliferation, including Indian and Pakistani motives for "going nuclear," while at the same time serving U S national interests

South Asian Nuclear Competition: History, Status and Doctrine

Indian and Pakistani nuclear weapons development programs were reactions to global and regional proliferation After the United States and Soviet Union detonated their first nuclear devices, and following a 1962 military victory over India, China exploded its first nuclear device in 1964 China's test and India's military defeat to China in turn spurred India's nuclear weapons program, and in 1974 India conducted its only test of an explosive nuclear device Hence, in the

Indian government's viewpoint, its nuclear weapons program is inextricably linked to global proliferation, a point which will be discussed in greater detail later

Pakistan's nuclear program began shortly after its loss in a 1971 war with India and accelerated after India's nuclear test in 1974 Pakistan has not conducted an explosive test Although both countries possess a nuclear weapons capability, neither has deployed an intact nuclear device or fitted one to a delivery vehicle [4]

India has one of the world's largest civilian and military nuclear establishments, with over 20,000 people engaged in nuclear efforts at 16 sites [5] The Institute for National Strategic Studies estimates that India has a stockpile sufficient to fuel nearly fifty weapons Indian nuclear-capable delivery systems include Jaguar, Mirage 2000 and MiG-27 fighter aircraft and two indigenously produced ballistic missiles The Prithvi is a single-stage, liquid fueled missile with a range of 150-250 kilometers, suggesting its intended target would be Pakistan The developmental Agni, a two-stage missile with a range of 2,500 kilometers, has been flight tested three times Its longer range suggests China as an intended target India also began a space launch vehicle program in the 1970s which developed three vehicles In the future India could modify these to serve as intermediate or intercontinental range ballistic missiles[6]

India's nuclear weapons program appears to be firmly in civilian control Prime Ministers from Nehru to the present "held ultimate authority over decisions to develop, construct, test, deploy, and use nuclear weapons " Indian military leaders, on the other hand, are dubious about nuclear weapons and concerned that building them would divert resources from conventional

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4 The Asia Society Preventing Nuclear Proliferation in South Asia, New York, 1005, p 4 and Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS), National Defense University, Strategic Assessment 1997 Flashpoints and Force Structure, Ft Leslie J McNair, Washington. D C , 1997, p 125

5 Perkovich, George, "A Nuclear Third Way in South Asia," Foreign Policy, Number 91, Summer 1993, p 86

6 INSS, p 125

forces and allow civilian leaders to assert more control over the military in any future conflict India lacks a command and control structure capable of reliably managing nuclear weapons from manufacture to deployment to actual use [7] Indian intelligence services lack national technical means for monitoring Pakistan's nuclear program Their reliability in providing information to policymakers for nuclear decisionmaking, such as Pakistan's nuclear status and intentions, is suspect [8]

Pakistan's indigenous nuclear program is much smaller than India's While Pakistan is self-sufficient in several technical areas, including the enrichment of uranium for weapons purposes, it relies on a clandestine procurement system to support weapons development Consequently, its weapons capability is smaller The Institute for National Strategic Studies estimates that Pakistan has enough stockpile to fuel six to ten weapons In addition to its indigenous capability, Pakistan has received nuclear expertise from China, which signed a nuclear cooperation agreement with Pakistan in 1986

Pakistani nuclear-capable delivery platforms include F-16 and Mirage fighter aircraft and ballistic missiles The indigenous Hatf-1 short range missile has design deficiencies and is limited to an 80 kilometer range The Hatf-2 and Hatf-3 are developmental missiles designed to redress the Hatf-1's limitations Additionally, China supplied Pakistan with the 280 kilometer range M-11 missile Some analysts believe the Hatf-3 is actually the Chinese-provided M-11 [9]

In contrast to India's civilian control over nuclear weapons, Pakistan's program operates nearly autonomously from civilian control (not surprising given the military's predominant role in

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7 Perkovich, p 91

8 Kapur, Ashok, "Western Biases," Bulletin of Atomic Scientists Vol 51, January 1995, p 38

9 INSS, pp 125-126

Pakistani politics) In 1992 a knowledgeable source stated that no Pakistani prime minister had ever been allowed to visit the country's nuclear facility [10] According to a former Carter Administration official and friend of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benezir Bhutto, Mrs Bhutto learned more about Pakistan's nuclear weapons program from a 1989 briefing by then-CIA Director William Casey than she had been told by her own military [11] As in India, Pakistan's command and control system for nuclear weapons is not well developed and its intelligence services are not capable of providing reliable intelligence on India's nuclear status and intentions [12]

Indian and Pakistani nuclear doctrine is not well developed or clearly articulated While neither country has fitted nuclear devices to delivery systems, both feel strongly that the capability to deploy them is vital for their national security and political interests While each side acknowledges its capability to build nuclear weapons, it also says it has no intention to do so Experts refer to this policy as maintaining the "nuclear option," or "non-weaponized," "existential," "opaque," or "recessed" deterrence [13]

Indian and Pakistani defense experts doubt the two countries will go to war again, but if conflict does occur they discount the possibility of a nuclear exchange They are much more sanguine on this point than western arms controllers who fear a nuclear exchange is more likely Many Indian and Pakistani elites resent these western nonproliferation concerns and characterize

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10 Perkovich, p 90

11 Hersh, Seymour M., 'On the Nuclear Edge," The New Yorker, March 29, 1993, p 61

12 Perkovich, p 88 and Kapur, p 38

13 Mian, Zia and Nayyar, A. H, "A Time of Testing," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Vol 52, June 1, 1996, p 35

them as racially biased -- a "white man's" view that "black and brown" people are unfit to have nuclear weapons [14]

Indian and Pakistani professional writings contain little on nuclear doctrine or deterrence theory and neither country has taken steps to defend against a nuclear attack, including development of civil defense measures [15] Instead, leaders in both nations seem to simply accept the mutual deterrent effects of one country being able to strike the other with a nuclear weapon Former Pakistani Army Chief of Staff General Mirza Aslam Beg articulated this viewpoint in a 1992 interview, "In the case of weapons of mass destruction, it is not the numbers that matter, but the destruction that can be caused by even a few The fear of retaliation lessens the likelihood of full-fledged war between India and Pakistan " The former head of India's nuclear program, Raja Ramanna, echoed this belief in a 1992 speech, " the logic of deterrence, namely that neither country possessing nuclear weapons will start a war, depends on many assumptions For example, the fear that the user nation will suffer as much damage as the attacked nation " [16]

South Asian Nuclear Incentives

India and Pakistan have stated their unwillingness to give up their nuclear weapons option in the near future Consequently, any successful U S nonproliferation strategy must address their incentives for retaining a nuclear capability While both countries believe a nuclear option is vital for their national security and political clout, their reasons for believing so vary These incentives can be grouped into four categories bilateral, regional, global and domestic

14 Perkovich, p 94

15 INSS, p 123

16 Perkovich, pp 88-89, 91

Bilateral motives for retaining a nuclear option are most obvious Quite simply, decades of hostile relations between the two countries, in which each side takes for granted the other's aggressive intentions, have hardened mutual distrust to the point that neither side believes it can relinquish the nuclear option so long as the other retains it The ongoing dispute over Kashmir, the cause of the 1948 and 1965 Indo-Pakistani wars and with no end in sight, keeps these tensions alive Conventional forces or insurgents backed by both countries shoot at each other almost daily in Kashmir and in 1987 and 1990 India and Pakistan came close to war again over this region

While Indian and Pakistani tensions over Kashmir remain high, leaders in both countries are convinced that the presence of a nuclear option induces caution in both sides which keeps the Kashmir conflict from producing another war -- in short, that the nuclear weapons capability on both sides has an inherent deterrent value Indian and Pakistani leaders openly stated that this mutual deterrence prevented the two sides from going to war in 1990 [17] This belief, although impossible to prove, has merit, India and Pakistan have not gone to war since their acquisition of the nuclear option

While India and Pakistan share mutual mistrust and the belief in mutual nuclear deterrence, Pakistan's conventional military inferiority to India gives it another incentive to retain the nuclear option From the Pakistani viewpoint, Pakistan is geostrategically dwarfed by the much larger, more populated and more technologically sophisticated India India's $8 billion annual defense budget is more than twice that of Pakistan's $3 3 billion annual defense allocation Pakistan can never hope to match India's conventional capability Therefore, Pakistanis see

17 Hagerty, Devin T , p 109

retaining a nuclear weapons capability as a prudent hedge against potential Indian military or political intimidation, and as a means of preventing another national humiliation such as the 1971 loss of Eastern Pakistan, which from their viewpoint was caused by Indian military intervention For this reason, Pakistan may be less willing than India to renounce its nuclear option However, India has regional incentives to retain the nuclear option beyond concern for Pakistan

India's regional incentive for retaining the nuclear option is China As already noted, India's nuclear development program was a reaction to China's first nuclear explosive test Some Indians contend that while the Pakistani threat is important, China poses a greater security concern They cite as evidence the Chinese-Indian territorial dispute, which caused their 1962 war, China's large nuclear arsenal compared to India's nascent program, and China's nuclear collusion with Pakistan For these Indians, the nuclear option is necessary to deter potential Chinese military threats and to enhance India's bargaining position with China Just as Pakistan uses the nuclear option to hedge against conventional inferiority with India, in the view of these Indians their nuclear option serves as a deterrent to conventional conflict with China [18]

Although Indian-Chinese relations have improved since the end of the Cold War, Indian leaders are concerned that Chinese intentions may change in the future While India may tend to exaggerate the Chinese threat, it is not unreasonable that the potential for Chinese economic growth -- and with it growth in military capabilities -- would evince the same fear of a stronger China in New Delhi as it has in Washington The U S government acknowledges this Indian concern and must take it into account in fashioning its nonproliferation policy for South Asia [19]

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18 The Asia Society, pp 5-6

19 U S Department of State, p 7

In addition to bilateral and regional incentives, India and Pakistan also have global motives to nuclearize These stem from both their identity as one of the world's great civilizations and their former colonial humiliation, and are closely and emotionally tied to their sense of sovereignty and nationhood Elites and non-elites in both countries believe the nuclear option gives their countries sovereignty in international relations which places them on a par with the world's great powers This perception is probably most strongly held in India which, since independence, has viewed itself as a world power to be reckoned with in the same way as the other great powers Because of this viewpoint, South Asians resent the fact that they are being asked by the declared nuclear powers to renounce a military capability which those same powers consider vital to their national security -- especially when the declared nuclear states face far less certain threats than India or Pakistan

In addition to the issue of national sovereignty, some nuclear weapons advocates in India and Pakistan believe the nuclear option allows them to engage in "strategic defiance," a guarantee of military independence from outside weapons suppliers and aid donors This independence has taken on greater importance in the post-Cold War era in which neither state enjoys the kind of close security cooperation it had with the United States and Russia during the Cold War From the viewpoint of these nuclear advocates, in spite of U S or Russian unwillingness or inability to provide military assistance or aid, neither country can deny India or Pakistan its ultimate security guarantee

Finally, India and Pakistan have compelling domestic incentives to retain their nuclear capabilities Immense popular support for the nuclear option, strong pro-bomb domestic

lobbies, and electoral competition between political parties in both countries make it exceedingly difficult for political leaders in either country to renounce the nuclear option

Opinion polls over the last 25 years in both countries show the vast majority of citizens (up to 85%) favor the acquisition of nuclear weapons if the other side has them [20] Additionally, in both countries the ministries of foreign affairs, the defense and scientific-technological establishments and the intelligence services constitute strong pro-nuclear lobbies Consequently, most political parties in both countries have taken strong positions against reversing the nuclear option In India, the increasingly strong Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has taken an aggressive pro-nuclear position An Indian former Ministry of Defense official sums up this domestic pressure to retain the nuclear option

> [With nuclear policy] deeply imbedded in the plebiscitary politics of both countries keeping the nuclear option open -- irrespective of its practical worth -- has become an article of faith In both countries the party in power and those in the opposition consider the nuclear issue to be the touchstone of their patriotism, and erosion of the nuclear option as renegade behavior [21]

Taken together, South Asian bilateral, regional, global and domestic incentives to retain nuclear options complicate U S nonproliferation policy and help explain its past failure to reverse the nuclear trend An examination of that history will provide some useful lessons which can guide the formation of a new strategy

History of U.S. Nonproliferation Strategy

Throughout the Cold War the United States attempted to use a combination of global, multilateral arms control agreements and bilateral incentives and disincentives to reverse the

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20 The Asia Society, p 11

21 Perkovich, George, "South Asian Instability," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Vol 51, September 1995, p 55

Indian and Pakistani nuclear options Subordinate goals of this effort included preventing the transfer of nuclear weapons technology and delivery systems to South Asia, banning nuclear tests and freezing the production of nuclear weapons grade fissionable material

The core of the U S multilateral arms control regime was the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) Designed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons technology, the NPT entered into force in 1970, after the United States, the Soviet Union, China, Britain and France were declared nuclear powers The treaty is supported by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards to ensure that nuclear technology exported for civilian purposes is not diverted to military applications India and Pakistan have long rejected the NPT on the basis of sovereignty concerns outlined above They argue that by dividing the world into nuclear "haves" and "have-nots" -- what they term a form of "nuclear apartheid" -- the treaty discriminates against the non-nuclear states They counter NPT supporters by charging that rather than focusing on nonproliferation, the declared nuclear powers should engage in global nuclear disarmament which would treat all nations as equals

India offered similar objections to the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and refused to sign this agreement which bans nuclear explosive tests, arguing that it lacked any provision for universal nuclear disarmament "within a time-bound framework "[22] India's ambassador to the CTBT negotiations maintained that India "cannot accept any restraints on its capability if other countries remain unwilling to accept the obligations to eliminate their nuclear weapons " In addition to this explicit statement, India likely felt the test ban would constrain its ability to develop, test and deploy sophisticated weapons to counter the perceived threat from

22 U S Department of State, p 2

China [23] Pakistan refused to sign the CTBT unless India did so first, but was also probably concerned that a freeze on test activity would leave India, with its more advanced nuclear weapons program, at an advantage In addition to their refusal to sign the CTBT, India and Pakistan are now attempting to counter the Fissile Materials Cutoff Treaty (FMCT), which would cease the production of fissile material used for nuclear weapons, by similarly linking it to global nuclear disarmament [24]

As another multilateral method of countering South Asian proliferation, the United States has used the 1987 Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), a coalition of G-7 partners since expanded to include 20 members, to stem the transfer of technology which could be used for nuclear-capable ballistic missiles However, member compliance with this regime is voluntary and the United States has already imposed MTCR sanctions on Russia and India for exports to New Delhi and on China and Pakistan for exports to Islamabad [25]

In addition to its global, multilateral arms control policies, the United States attempted to use bilateral incentives and disincentives to reverse Indian and Pakistani nuclear programs Both countries, however, resent what they consider to be a heavy handed carrots and sticks approach to nuclear issues U S -Indian controversies on nuclear issues date to the 1950s when the United States sought international checks on India's work with fissionable materials The two also fought on IAEA safeguards for an American-supplied Indian reactor However, due to the American Cold War tilt toward Pakistan and India's defense relationship with the Soviet Union, most U S bilateral attention focused on Pakistan

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23 Perkovich, George, "India s Nuclear Weapons Debate Unlocking the Door to the CTBT," Arms Control Today, Vol 26, May 1, 1996, p 11

24 U S Department of State, p 4

25 The Asia Society, p 25

U S policy with Pakistan has gone through several phases Up to the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, U S administrations used carrots (offers of aid and conventional weapons) and sticks (cutting off aid and using diplomatic pressure) to discourage Pakistan's nuclear weapons work However, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan grew in geostrategic importance to the United States as a base for countering the Soviets, and the Reagan and Bush administrations provided billions of dollars of aid to Pakistan Nevertheless, in 1989 the Pakistani foreign secretary claimed publicly that Pakistan possessed a nuclear weapons capability and following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the U S reverted to emphasis on sticks rather than carrots In 1990 President Bush invoked the Pressler amendment of the U S Nonproliferation Act, which requires the president to certify that Pakistan does not possess a nuclear device in order for the United States to provide aid to Pakistan, and aid was cutoff Then in 1996, the U S reversed course again with passage of the Brown amendment, which permitted resumption of limited military aid to Pakistan

In the final assessment, traditional U S nonproliferation policies toward India and Pakistan failed Both countries continue to reject multilateral arms control initiatives, such as the NPT, CTBT and FMCT, as discriminatory Both circumvented the MTCR or used their indigenous capabilities to develop ballistic missiles Neither bilateral U S carrots nor sticks prevented them from developing the nuclear option or reversing it To the contrary, American nonproliferation initiatives have only strengthened Indian and Pakistani determination to resist U S power In their own analysis, Indian and Pakistani leaders weighed international arms control pressures and U S carrots and sticks on one scale and their own bilateral, regional, global and

domestic incentives to nuclearize on the other, and deemed their incentives to outweigh potential benefits or penalties from reversing course

Apparently in recognition of these realities, the Clinton administration changed U S nonproliferation goals in South Asia from rollback to first capping, then over time reducing, and finally over the long term eliminating nuclear weapons and their delivery means in the region This approach is a more realistic appraisal of proliferation within the South Asian context The next section of this essay will propose a strategy for achieving these ends, first by examining U S interests in the region related to the proliferation issue, then considering threats and opportunities, and concluding with specific policy proposals

Strategy of Non-Weaponized Deterrence and Reassurance

U S Nonproliferation Interests

While the United States does not have vital interests in South Asia, it does have important interests which would be harmed by an Indo-Pakistani dispute escalating into a nuclear conflict The first interest is humanitarian Twenty percent of the world's population live in India and Pakistan, many clustered in large cities within range of ballistic missiles and fighter aircraft Even a limited nuclear exchange would kill millions of people, including American citizens residing in the region Radiological fallout from a nuclear strike could also affect the wider Asian region Secondly, a nuclear strike would break the "nuclear taboo" which has prevailed in international relations since the U S nuclear strikes on Japan at the end of World War Two This long period of non-use tended to de-legitimize nuclear weapons in intra-state conflict Breaking this taboo would be a dangerous precedent [26] Finally, destruction from a nuclear strike would setback

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26 Hagerty, p 81

Indian and Pakistani economic development, thereby harming potential U S economic benefits which could otherwise be derived from trade with and investment in the region Several circumstances could destabilize the South Asian nuclear competition and harm U S national interests

Threats to U S Interests

The first threat to the nuclear status quo in South Asia would be if Pakistan or India declared itself a nuclear power possessing assembled nuclear devices Such a declaration would almost certainly cause the other side to reciprocate Assembled nuclear weapons could then lead to a more open nuclear arms race and would reduce decisionmaking time on both sides in any resultant crisis Secondly, a nuclear explosive test in either country would similarly prompt the other side to respond in kind Mutual tests would signal intentions to develop more sophisticated weaponry and could also destabilize the status quo The third and most immediate threat of nuclear proliferation concerns ballistic missiles At present, neither side is capable of a preemptive assured first strike on the other However, if either side were to deploy ballistic missiles, this could prompt the other to devise launch-on-warning or early-first-use doctrines This scenario would place both countries at increased risk Finally, a conventional Indo-Pakistani conflict over Kashmir could escalate into a nuclear exchange In a conflict over Kashmir, even conventional strikes on either side's nuclear facilities would threaten their second strike nuclear retaliatory potential, and could lead to first use The United States feared this scenario during the 1987 and 1990 crises, and in 1990 dispatched Deputy National Security Advisor Robert Gates to the region

to help defuse tensions While these threats could destabilize the region, the nuclear status quo also presents American policymakers with some opportunities which could prevent these threats from materializing

Policy Opportunities

The most important opportunity for U S nonproliferation strategy is the established status quo of South Asian mutual deterrence Leaders on both sides firmly believe in the deterrent value of their nuclear options and admit that nuclear ambiguity induces caution in their crisis decisionmaking In a 1996 article in *International Security*, Devin Hagerty explains why this mutual deterrence is effective First, Hagerty points out, neither side is capable of conducting a first strike which would assure them of eliminating the other side's nuclear retaliatory capability Given Indian and Pakistani intelligence limitations, too many questions whose answers are necessary for an assured first strike are unanswered How many warheads does the other side have? Are they assembled? If so, where are they located? Are they mobile or hidden? Which are real and which are dummies? If weapons are unassembled, where are the components stored? Hagerty explains this logic of deterrence

> In sum all that is necessary to deter the launching of a preemptive strike is 'first strike uncertainty,' or the planting of a seed of doubt in the minds of the potential attacker's leaders about whether it is possible to destroy all of the victim's nuclear weapons before it can retaliate even a 99 percent success rate could well be suicidal

Hagerty further points out that U S experience in the Gulf War and the Cuban Missile Crisis highlights the difficulty of conducting an assured first strike In DESERT STORM, the January 1991 allied target list included only two Iraqi nuclear installations, yet U N inspectors after the war discovered over twenty Iraqi nuclear installations More than 1,000 hours of allied air strikes left much of this nuclear infrastructure untouched In the Cuban Missile Crisis, as soon

as the Air Force could not promise to destroy more than ninety percent of the Soviet missiles, President Kennedy quickly ruled out air strikes and decided on a quarantine In both cases, American intelligence capabilities far exceeded those of the Indian and Pakistani intelligence services today [27]

In addition to the stability provided by their mutual deterrence, India and Pakistan have exercised nuclear restraint and reached some agreements, explicit and implicit, which can serve as the building blocks of U S nonproliferation policy The two agreed not to attack each other's nuclear facilities, not to deploy operational nuclear weapons, not to deploy nuclear-capable ballistic missiles, not to conduct explosive tests, not to transfer nuclear weapons technology to other states, and both have refrained from developing nuclear doctrines which might make nuclear use appear more conceivable [28]

Indian and Pakistani desires to improve their economic conditions afford an additional opportunity for U S policy Leaders in both countries realize they cannot achieve sustainable economic development and growth without cooperation from the international community Furthermore, both realize that diverting scarce resources from the economy to fielding expensive ballistic missiles and their requisite command and control structures would be economically damaging They also realize that escalation of their nuclear competition, especially to include a nuclear test, would result in widespread international condemnation and sanctions Consequently, they must balance their desires to keep their nuclear options open with their need to sustain economic growth This opportunity does not mean that U S nonproliferation policy should emphasize a carrots and sticks approach, but rather that Indian and Pakistani leaders are subject to

27 Hagerty, pp 84-85

28 Hagerty, Devin T , "South Asia's Nuclear Balance," Current History, April 1996, p 169

persuasion that expensive nuclear arsenals or escalating nuclear competition are not in their self-interest

A New Strategy Approach

A new U S approach to nonproliferation in South Asia should accept the reality that India and Pakistan are unlikely to reverse their nuclear course in the short term, and take advantage of the stability their mutual deterrence imposes on their relationship at present At the same time, U S strategy should seek to mitigate those threats which can destabilize the Indo-Pakistani relationship and lead to a dangerous nuclear arms race

The new strategy must address the two countries' incentives to retain the nuclear option The bilateral Indo-Pakistani dispute is a starting point, but the strategy must address China as well in order to succeed The United States need not drop its global nonproliferation goals embodied in the NPT, CTBT and FMCT, but should accept that they may only be achieved over the long term when global and regional conditions have changed Long term U S progress in nuclear arms reduction talks with Russia, China and others, with similar progress between India and Pakistan, may create the conditions for such a regime

In the short term, the United States should stop preaching to India and Pakistan on the NPT as this only serves to strengthen their resistance and convince them of American duplicity The tone the United States uses in its dealing with these two nations -- both proud civilizations sensitive about their sovereignty -- will be important to our success

Successful U S nonproliferation strategy for South Asia will of necessity be long term, incremental and evolutionary Small, verifiable achievements along the way which increase the transparency of each side's nuclear program while protecting their vital secrets, can build a mutual trust which can then serve as a building block for further negotiations and agreements The primary U S instruments for implementing this strategy are quiet diplomacy and intelligence sharing

A New Strategy Ways and Means

The first step in this proposed strategy is to stabilize regional mutual nuclear deterrence by creating institutional mechanisms which would codify existing Indian and Pakistani restraint and tacit agreements The U S should work to obtain agreements from the two sides to freeze their nuclear programs, including additional production of fissionable materials, refrain from flight testing or deploying delivery systems, not conduct nuclear tests, not use nuclear weapons first, and not transfer nuclear technologies to third countries Obtaining such agreements must be done quietly so that leaders in both countries would not be perceived as renouncing their nuclear options Verification of these agreements would be critical to their success Consequently, both sides must begin by accepting verification as an objective, and then work out detailed measures which would increase each side's confidence in agreed restraints [29]

The U S could play a useful role in verification by providing intelligence to both sides The Gates mission to Islamabad and New Delhi in 1990 did this with some success, and both countries seemed to appreciate U S mediation and intelligence data However, as India and Pakistan may not completely trust U S verification, other nations, multilateral organizations or

29 See The Asia Society, pp 16-18, 31-39 and George Perkovich, "A Nuclear Third Way in South Asia," pp 96-102 for a more detailed description of possible Indo-Pakistani nuclear agreements,

even private parties might be encouraged to participate in verification Additionally, the U S and multilateral organizations might consider financing commercial satellite photography for both India and Pakistan so that each side would have independent technical means of verification Ultimately, the two sides might be able to agree to mutual on-site inspections

In order to allay Indian concerns about China and weaken pro-bomb advocates in India who cite the Chinese threat as their rationale, the United States should negotiate with China to get it to pull back its nuclear delivery forces from the South Asia region China could also be urged to publicly announce a no-first-use policy toward India The United States should continue to pressure China not to provide nuclear and ballistic missile technologies to Pakistan

The United States should also scrap the Pressler amendment which punishes Pakistan for its nuclear program, but not India Furthermore, so long as the Pressler amendment can be invoked against Pakistan, India has no motive to slow its nuclear program in such a way that it would encourage Pakistan to do the same, thereby relieving Pakistan of Pressler amendment sanctions Instead of tools such as the U S Nuclear Nonproliferation Act and its Pressler amendment, which punish South Asia for nuclear capabilities already acquired, any U S sanctions or inducements should be linked to Indian and Pakistani progress on the bilateral agreements outlined above

Finally, the United States should continue to use the Missile Technology Control Regime as a means of restricting the export of ballistic missile technologies to India and Pakistan Although the MTCR is imperfect, and India and Pakistan have managed to develop ballistic missiles in spite of it, without the MTCR third parties would not be constrained from exporting technology to Pakistan

Conclusion

A U S strategy for first capping, then reducing and later eliminating Indian and Pakistani nuclear programs, the declared goal of the Clinton administration, will require long, difficult and skilled diplomatic work Indian and Pakistani incentives for retaining their nuclear options and their mutual mistrust are deeply felt Both counties are mistrustful of U S nonproliferation policies based on many years of nuclear controversy, but at the same time have shown some willingness to accept U S mediation Ultimately, any nonproliferation regime for the region will require the political will of leaders in both countries By acknowledging valid Indian and Pakistani security concerns and recognizing the futility of eliminating their nuclear capabilities in the short term, this strategy approach may give South Asian leaders the maneuvering room they need in order to muster the political will needed to stabilize their nuclear competition While it opts to achieve the attainable goal of stability in the short term , rather than aiming at the perfect but unattainable goal of nuclear rollback, it may create the conditions under which that more perfect end can be achieved in the future

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